

REMARKS

Claims 1-33 are pending, and new claims 34-37 are added. By this amendment, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 14 by (i) deleting the terms “essentially” and “and” at line 6 and line 5, respectively, and (ii) incorporating the phrase “, and water” after the term “hydroxide” at line 7 and line 5, respectively.

In addition, Applicant has amended claim 25 by deleting the term “essentially” and adding the phrase “water and” between the terms “of” and “an” at line 3. Applicant has also revised claim 31 by eliminating the term “essentially” at line 3.

Furthermore, Applicant has added new claims 34-37, which are all dependent on claims 1, 14, 25 and 31, respectively.

The addition of the new claims and claim amendments are supported by the entire specification, particularly at pages 3-7 (particularly at lines 23-28) and 11-14.

Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments and the addition of new claims do not introduce new matter. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to enter these amendments.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

On Pages 2-10 of the Office Action, various claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), *i.e.*, as being anticipated. In particular, claims 1-4, 7-11, and 14-28 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,888,323 to Matsuda *et al.* (hereinafter “Matsuda”); claims 1-4, 7-11, and 14-28 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,929,383 to Haendler (hereinafter “Haendler”); claims 1-11, 13-23, and 25-30 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,929,661 to Nakagawa *et al.* (hereinafter “Nakagawa”); claims 1-3, 7-11, 13-23, and 25-27 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,746,936 to Mercado *et al.* (hereinafter “Mercado”); claims 1-5, 7-11 and 14-29 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,120,555 to Scialla *et al.* (hereinafter “Scialla”); claims 1-11, 14-23 and 25-30 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,204,235 to Carillo *et al.* (hereinafter “Carillo”); claims 1-3, 7-11, and 13-27 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,843,190 to Agostini *et al.* (hereinafter “Agostini”); and claims 1-5, 7-11 and 25-29 stand rejected as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,731,276, to Argo *et al.* (hereinafter “Argo”).

Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections. In particular, Applicant respectfully submits that the above amendments to independent claims 1, 14, and 25 overcome these rejections. As noted, Applicant has deleted the term “essentially” from the composition ingredients. Since each of the cited references is deficient in failing to disclose or suggest removal of stains using a modified hypochlorite salt-containing solution that consists of water, a hypochlorite salt and an alkali metal hydroxide, Applicant respectfully submits that each rejection is now moot, and requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the respective § 102(b) rejections. None of these references discloses or suggests the claimed methods or kits for reducing the damaging effect of a hypochlorite salt-containing solution on soft fabric articles that consists of water, a hypochlorite salt and an alkali metal hydroxide.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

On Page 10, Section 10, the Office Action rejects claims 12 and 31, as being obvious over the references cited in the Office Action. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Claim 12 is dependent on claim 1, which has been amended by the deletion of the term “essentially” and addition of the term “water” as one of the components of the claimed bleaching composition. Likewise, claim 31 has been amended by the removal of the term “essentially” and the addition of water as one of the components of the bleaching composition as presently claimed.

In light of the amendments and above-mentioned remarks, Applicant respectfully submits that all of the references cited in the Office Action, either individually or in combination, fail to teach or suggest the use of a modified hypochlorite salt-containing solution, as recited in claims 12 and 31, that consists of water, a hypochlorite salt and an alkali metal hydroxide, for the removal of stains, such as, but not limited to, menstrual fluid or underarm perspiration stains.


Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the Office Action has failed to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. See MPEP § 2143.03 (“To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art”). Accordingly, Applicant earnestly requests the Examiner to reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claims 12 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

CONCLUSION

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable consideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly requested. Although Applicant believes that no fee is due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any payment deficiency to Deposit Account No. 19-2380 referring to Attorney Docket Number 031889-004000.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desired in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative at the telephone number shown below.

Respectfully submitted,


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